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For Immediate Release: April 7, 1998
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**Newark, County Officials Unveil New Design
For Sports Stadium; Relocated Site To Complement
Downtown Growth**

Newark, NJ (Apr. 7)... Essex County Executive James W. Treffinger and Newark Mayor Sharpe James today unveiled the "new design" for the city's proposed \$22 million Sportsplex Project Plan.

The project which features a minor league baseball stadium is now sited downtown just north of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

In the 17th floor conference room of One Newark Center, a major office complex housing Seton Hall Law School, the two officials unveiled architectural renderings and other details including a one-year schedule for construction of the multi-purpose stadium on an 11-acre site at the northern end of Newark's business district.

HOK, Inc, the nation's leading sports architectural firm who designed the award winning Camden Yards in Baltimore, is designing the Newark stadium. Ground breaking ceremonies at the stadium site have been scheduled for Wednesday, May 6th at 11: A.M. with opening day planned for May 1999.

The new location, within two blocks of the Erie-Lackawanna train station and close by entrances and exits to Interstate Route 280, is designed as a multi-purpose facility capable of hosting baseball, football, soccer and other special events. It's location is on the east side of Broad Street near the corner of Bridge Street.

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Treffinger and James said they successfully sought approval for the plans by way of documents, resolutions and ordinances before the city and county legislatures and now have authorization for the relocation of the proposed site from Riverbank park to the Bridge Street site.

"This vital project is a cornerstone to the revitalization of Newark's downtown, and the new and exciting Bridge Street location ties the stadium to the Broad Street Station, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Penn Station and eventually Newark International Airport via the Newark Rail Link," said Treffinger, adding, "NJ PAC is the next stop after the stadium."

"I am excited about these plans and this new site. This time next year, I expect to be throwing out a baseball for the new, Newark Bears in this gorgeous new, state-of-the-art baseball stadium," said Mayor James while pointing out the stadium will be the northern anchor for Newark's waterfront development project and will be linked via New Jersey's new rail link directly to the airport and all rail lines that serve Newark.

"These wonderful mass transit connections, combined with the stadium's easy access to major highways and strategic location in downtown Newark, create a win, win situation for New Jersey's largest city. It puts us in a league with Cleveland and Baltimore, whose comeback as major American cities has been tied to the development of arts and sports centers," said James.

"We have now seen the NJ Performing Arts Center change the face of the river front in Newark. The addition of a professional sports complex will complete the revitalization and bring even more families to the downtown area," said Treffinger.

The proposed facility will serve as home to the Newark Bears and will be the city's entry into the new Atlantic League of Professional Baseball Clubs. Other team sites expected in the league in addition to Newark are Atlantic City and Somerset County in New Jersey, Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania, Nashua, New Hampshire and Suffolk County on Long Island.

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The previously designated site for the stadium was Riverbank Park, a nine-acre, county owned recreation area between Raymond Boulevard and Market Street in the Ironbound section of the city but plans were scrapped due to the morass of state and federal regulations affecting the project.

"This project exemplifies the public/private partnerships that are shaping Newark's future as we move into the next millennium. It will be a beautiful anchor to the northern end of our \$76 million Joseph G. Minish Riverfront Park and provide jobs both during and after the construction process," said Mayor James.

According to Treffinger, "the return of professional baseball to Newark is just another step in the ongoing economic upturn that is taking place all across Essex County and county government is proud to be a partner."

The Mayor said: "I can hardly wait to see the smiles on our young people once again enjoying the kind of excitement I felt as a young boy watching the Newark Bears and Eagles play in Ruppert Stadium. This time, we will have one team, and we will build something we can all be proud of, a facility that will provide affordable family entertainment for the young and old."

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Groundbreaking for replacement
park next Wed. April 15